

the **Banner** *of Truth*

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Easter Morning

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and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent." MATTHEW 27:51*



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Meditation

Necessary Instruction on Easter Morning

Rev. C. Vogelaar, Clifton, NJ

“Jesus saith unto her, Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God” (John 20:17).

An apparent rejection

After His resurrection the Lord Jesus appeared to His grieving disciples. The first one was Mary. She was the first witness of Christ’s resurrection. A woman had anointed Him for His burial, and now a woman was the first to whom Christ revealed Himself in His resurrection glory. As the great Physician He knew where the greatest need was. It must have been unforgettable when the Lord Jesus addressed her while she was standing before the empty sepulcher, “Mary.” One word was enough for her, and “She turned herself, and saith unto Him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.” Her heart was filled with heavenly joy; she wanted to embrace Him and to never let Him go.

It was then that the Lord Jesus said unto her, “Touch Me not.” This seemed to be a disappointing and harsh, cold answer, but that is a mistaken idea, for, in reality, His reply was full of precious instruction and blessed comfort. Indeed, it seemed as if the Lord Jesus’ dealings with Mary were different from the others. We read in Matthew 28 of the women returning from the grave, “And they came and held Him by the feet.” Of Thomas we read that the Lord even spoke to him, “Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side.” However, Mary Magdalene was forbidden even to touch Him.

This word “touch,” however, has a very strong meaning—to hold on to Him as if she would never let Him go. It was as with a mother whose child escapes from a great danger and she receives him back and presses him to her heart. She has her child back! Now Mary Magdalene had her Saviour back. Oh, had He not performed miracles of love in her life? He had delivered her from the bondage of the power of sin and made her a true follower of Him. That was His incomprehensible goodness and grace shown to a wretched sinner.

Mary Magdalene had also heard His wonderful instruction. She had seen His marvelous works. She was very much devoted to His service; she loved Him so firmly—was it not understandable that she wanted to show this? She meant that after the sad days that lay behind her, she would return to the blessed past when she could be near to Him and enjoy His company.

This is not strange to God’s children. They may enjoy times of His fellowship, His visits, and His comforting,

promising instruction. They feel the tokens of His gracious deeds, of His love and goodness. There is not only gladness but also hope in their heart. They live upon their feelings instead of by faith only. If the Lord would do what they desire, it would never change but only increase. Mary wanted Jesus to stay with her and then to forget those horrible experiences and events of Good Friday and the following days. Her faith was imperfect. She was ignorant of the necessity of His exaltation, of the progress of His work. She would need an exalted King at the right hand of God, a High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. What He had merited for her would also have to be applied. There was more to be done for Mary and all Christ’s disciples. Naomi once said to Ruth, “For the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.”

Necessary instruction

Christ was going to present Himself unto the Father as the first fruits from the dead and enter into the glory that He had with the Father before the world was. There is a necessary progress in the work of the Lord. Oh, how blind God’s children often are for that. Mary had learned something of the name Immanuel, God with us, and what a blessing that is. What a wonder that a holy and righteous God and a black, vile, wretched sinner are brought together. The breach between God and man is taken away by the finished work of Christ. However, we did not fall out of communion with the Lord Jesus but with a Triune God. When the Lord begins His work by His Spirit in the heart, the emptiness, the missing of God, will be experienced. This missing cannot be taken away by the wonderful experience that Christ is alive as the Greater Joseph. He is the Way back to the Father but, oh, Mary, then you cannot keep Him here. He will go to the Father to give back to prodigal sons and daughters what they have lost in their fall. It was necessary that Mary receive further instruction. If the Lord Jesus would have left up to her what to do, He would have stayed with her. However, the Servant of the Father will continue His work in heaven.

A wonderful message

Mary received a commission: “But go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God.” She would be the messenger of good tidings, especially the address of the message, “My brethren.” The holy Son of God calls His redeemed Church “My brethren” or sisters. How could that be? That is because His Father is also their Father.

Mary had called Him Rabboni, that is, “my Master”; however, He is more. He restored her in the position she had lost, that is, child of His Father.

No, it is true, He did not say to “our Father” but instead “to My Father, and your Father.” Christ is the only begotten Son; He is co-essential with the Father and the Holy Spirit. True believers are adopted children. The Lord Jesus would go to bring His Church home. In His resurrection the foundation of their being children is confirmed. They are all justified. They now “have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” but Christ is not only given for their justification; they will also be brought back unto the Father. What an eternal wonder that is. Lost prodigal sons and daughters who were fallen away from God and had become His enemies are not only reconciled to Him but are called His children. The work of Christ will continue until His bride is where He is and where He has prepared a place for her. That is why He cannot be stopped in His work. Mary, it is a word of comfort. He will finish that which He has undertaken for you.

Oh, Church of God, perhaps you wonder how can that ever be for you. It is a blessing if you have learned to know a little of the preciousness of the Saviour, if He has become to you altogether lovely, if you have learned to know not only the necessity but also the suitableness and willingness of the Lord Jesus to redeem wretched ones like you. Perhaps you say, yes, I have seen that it is possible for me. May it then be your cry to know Him, not only as that great Prophet to teach sinners in the way but also to be led to the knowledge of Him as a Surety who paid your debts. If you do not know how you can ever be brought back into communion with a triune God, the Holy Spirit will teach you the mystery that with man these things may appear to be impossible, but all things are possible with God. Christ, indeed, is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. Oh, seek then His instruction and say with Ruth, “Spread therefore Thy skirt over thine handmaid; for Thou art a near Kinsman.” He will not forsake the work of His own hands. In His work, He will receive the honor and will be glorified. □



Bible Study

The Life of Moses (5)

Rev. C. Vogelaar, Clifton, NJ

“And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray Thee, by the hand of him whom Thou wilt send” (Exodus 4:13).

Moses was called by the Lord at the burning bush. The Lord told him, “And I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people the children of Israel out of Egypt.” It was a clear calling for the eighty-year-old Moses. He did have objections: what must he say to the Israelites when he would tell them that the God of their fathers had sent him, and they would say unto him, what is His name? The Lord had answered him that he could say that the unchangeable Jehovah, the covenant Lord, was the one who had given him his task. Tell the children of Israel, “I AM hath sent me unto you.” The Lord had taken away his objections. He had also shown what the results would be of his mission. He promised very positively, “I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt.”

The Lord had given him the encouragement in Exodus 3:18, “And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, the LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.”

Moses dares not

God’s servant had first responded in humility and unworthiness. “Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh?” The Lord had assured Moses that He would be with him, and after Moses inquired into whose name he should address Israel, He had revealed Himself as the great I AM, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Lord had promised that He would deliver His people from the affliction of Egypt and bring them into Canaan. That would take place in spite of the enmity and resistance from Pharaoh. No, Moses could not say that the Lord had not spoken to him.

He continued to raise objections. “And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee” (Exodus 4:1). Moses dared not do what the Lord had so clearly commanded him. Then the Lord endued his recalcitrant servant with three wonders or signs.

1) The rod—The rod had to be cast on the ground, and it became a serpent, but when Moses put forth his hand and took it by the tail it became a rod again in his hand. Moses, that rod is mightier than the scepter of Pharaoh. It is a picture of God’s Word, of the almighty power of God over against the golden scepter of Pharaoh.

- 2) He had to put his hand into his bosom, and when he did so and took it out, "Behold, his hand was leprous as snow." This sign showed who Moses himself was, the corruption of his own heart, his unbelief. When he put his hand again into his bosom and took it out, "behold, it was turned again as his other flesh." This showed God's recreating power to take away sin.
- 3) Water—The water had to be taken out of the river. The Nile was a goddess for the Egyptians. Without the Nile there would be a life of barrenness. From the Nile the Egyptians expected blessings and prosperity. However, God will change their blessings into a curse. He is mightier than the idols of the Egyptians.

Moses cannot

Moses still had objections. He said that he was not eloquent: "And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue" (verse 10). Was that true? Stephen said in Acts 7:22, "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds." Both were true—Moses was well educated but not an eloquent speaker. However, some people can say much with few words while others use many words and say very little. The Lord used the simple language of Bunyan far more than the polished writings of thousands of learned men without grace. Moses was deeply convinced of the highness of his office but also of his own feebleness; yet, what he said was the reasoning of unbelief. The Lord said, "I know who you are, Moses, and I will use you as you are." Other examples of this in Scripture are: Ehud was left-handed but used by God, David was still young and the least of his brethren but used against the Philistines and later as a king, and Paul had a thorn in his flesh but was mightily used in the Lord's service.

The Lord gave Moses a promise: "Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." What an encouraging promise, also for God's servants in our days. We read in Isaiah 41:13, "For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee."

Moses will not

We would say, is this not enough which the Lord has spoken to him? Does He need to take away his fear and his objections even more? We read in Exodus 4:13, "And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom Thou wilt send." Moses was unwilling to act as the Lord's ambassador. How truthful Scripture is in describing how

even the most holy ones remain sinners. Scripture recorded not only Moses' faithfulness but also his foolishness. It is a proof of the divine veracity of the Scriptures.

We read in verse 14a that the "anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses." Nevertheless, the Lord did not send Moses away but Aaron the Levite, his brother, would go with him. Aaron may be the spokesman, and Moses would tell him what to say: "And I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do." What a wonder! We would expect that the Lord would have said, "It is enough; I cannot use you." Moses received part of his request; Aaron went with him, but it was not to his honor. It can be in God's disfavor when the Lord gives us what we keep asking. Moses would also experience some bitter fruits. Did not Aaron make the golden calf, although he was pressured by the people? Therefore, God's wrath was kindled upon Israel.

However, the Lord is long suffering, and Moses was not dismissed. The Lord would give him still another sign that He would give him success. As Moses returned to Egypt, he would find Aaron coming forth to meet him.

Christ greater than Moses

God's servant Moses could indeed be a type of Christ. He was called to Pharaoh, a tyrant, and Christ was called to go to Beelzebub and say, "Let My people go." Moses would lead them out of the house of bondage, safe behind the Blood of the Lamb. Christ would lead captives out of the house of bondage and sin. He had to pay with His own blood. Moses was part of the deliverance of Israel—he was delivered himself. Christ would perish under the wrath of God.

Moses received Aaron with him; Christ must say, "I am a stranger to My brethren." Moses received the promise of the Lord, "I will be with you and will not forsake you." The Lord said to Christ, His Son, "When Thou art going to do that work, I will forsake Thee; Thou hast to do it alone." Moses was received graciously by the people, and they believed him. Christ came to His own, and His own received Him not. Moses did not dare, was unable, but also unwilling. Christ was ready, able, qualified, willing. "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me" (Psalm 40:7).

Oh, how suitable this Deliverer is. Did we already learn our need of Him? Has He become our only Hope and Refuge? How faithful He is even for His unfaithful servants and people. Therefore, their hope and expectation can be from Him only. ▢

(To be continued)

Those whom God will employ are first struck with a sense of their unworthiness to be employed.

—Matthew Henry

Curatorium Announcement

The past two years have been filled with uncertainty as the judgments of the Lord have been evident upon the world and the church. May they also have brought to their knees those who sigh for the welfare of Zion, that the Lord may sanctify the solemn callings and give an increase in His true Church, whom He instructs under afflictions.

Although much remains uncertain, the Curatorium of the Netherlands Reformed Theological School has thought it best to schedule a meeting, the Lord willing, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on June 8, 2022, at the Beckwith Avenue Church. At this meeting Student Kleijer is to be examined after his third year of studies, and Student Slingerland after his fourth year, with hopes to be made a candidate for the holy ministry. As well, any who have received an attest from their consistory will have the opportunity to be heard by the Curatorium.

Baruch, the son of Neriah, was but a scribe of God's servant Jeremiah, yet he had to suffer persecution for his work, since King Jehoiakim commanded him to be apprehended along with his master. This burden he seemed not prepared to bear. "Woe is me now! for the LORD hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest" (Jeremiah 45:3). However, the time the LORD called him to his work was one of special tribulation for His Church, and thus He also prepared him for suffering under it, saying, "And seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not:

for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest" (Jeremiah 45:5).

The time we live in is little different, for it is the end time. It is no time for a man to seek the ministry who seeks great things for himself. No, he should not expect a life of ease and honor, for the devil increases his devices against the church and the truly called servants of the LORD, both from within and from without. Yet, the LORD will keep their lives under His protection. Let such as struggle under His calling settle it in their minds, then, that the way will be filled with hardships and trials. Let them settle it in their minds that self-honor and glory is not the portion assigned to His servants here below. Yet, Baruch remained the faithful servant of the LORD as a scribe of Jeremiah, under the strengthening hand of the LORD, as He promised him. If that is sufficient for one who feels called by the LORD to His work, let him present himself to his consistory for their judgment.

If a consistory receives freedom to grant an attest, please notify the clerk of the Curatorium, who will forward a request for information. The applicant should also forward his own request to the clerk, asking to be heard by the Curatorium. Vacant congregations should seek the help of their moderator in all these matters, and all information should be submitted as soon as possible. May the LORD remember His Church and His servants in these latter days.

On behalf of the Curatorium,
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Fruits of the Risen Saviour

Rev. W.C. Lamain (1904-1984)

"In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre" (Matthew 28:1).

It is inexpressible how sad a Sabbath the women and the disciples experienced after their Lord and Saviour was laid in the grave. Nevertheless, they rested according to the commandment, but it had hardly begun to dawn when they were at the place where the body was laid. It did not only begin to dawn in nature; it also began to dawn in the heaven of God's providence concerning Messiah's work of redemption. After much sorrow, joy comes to all upright

hearts. This was also confirmed to these women who, wanting to anoint a dead Jesus, received a living Jesus instead. This clearly shows that all the spices God's people prepare are worthless when Christ reveals Himself to their soul and when the Father puts His seal on His own finished work. Fear not, downcast Church, the Lord precedes you with His own work. Jesus has risen for your justification. ▢



From Our Inheritance

Offering and Sacrifice (1)

F.M. Krummacher (1796-1868)

(Taken from *The Suffering Saviour*, 1978 Edition, ISBN 0-8024-8427-1)

We shall confine our present meditation to the state of resignation in which we left our great High Priest at the close of the last chapter. He yields Himself up to His adversaries and suffers them to do with Him as they please.

With what feelings the holy angels must have witnessed their Lord being taken prisoner—they whom the Saviour's humiliation never for a moment prevented from being conscious of His real character and dignity; they who, wherever He went, perceived in Him the Lord of glory and the King of kings whose throne they ventured to approach only with veiled faces. Let us realize, if possible, what they must have felt at that moment when looking down from the clouds seeing the High and Lofty One surrounded by the officers as if He had been the vilest of criminals. Here they witnessed the Prince of heaven taken captive with swords and staves, the Judge of the world fettered like a murderer and then dragged away under the escort of a crowd of ruthless men amid blasphemies and curses—next to be put on trial.

May not a cry of horror have rung through heaven and the idea have occurred to those holy beings that the measure of human wickedness was now full, and that the day of vengeance on the ungodly earth had arrived? We can so easily forget, in His appearance as a man, who it is we have before us in the humbled individual of Nazareth, and it is only now and then that it flashes through our minds whom He really is. Then our heart becomes petrified with amazement, and we can only look in silent astonishment.

However dreadful His position may be, the Saviour bears with composure these outrageous proceedings. He delivers Himself up, to whom?—to the armed band, the officers, and servants. Yet, we are witnesses of another yielding up of Himself, one that is veiled and invisible. The latter is of incomparably greater importance to us than that which is apparent to the outward senses. Christ here gives Himself up to His Father, first as an “offering” (Ephesians 5:2). How shall we sufficiently appreciate the excellency of this offering? Behold Him, then, as One against whom all hell may be let loose without being able to cast the slightest blemish on His innocence; as One who endured the fiercest ordeal without the smallest trace of dross; who boldly withstood the storm of temptation; who in a state of the most painful inward privations preserved unshaken His love to His Father.

Although His Father's heart seemed turned away from Him, yet He continued to regard as His meat and drink doing the will of Him who sent Him, who in a situation in which acute agony forced Him to sweat blood could never-

theless pray from the bottom of His heart that not what He desired but what the eternal Father wished and had determined respecting Him might take place. Such is the dazzling, pure, immutably holy, and severely tested offering which Christ in His own person presents to the Father.

Regard Him now as submitting Himself in obedience to His Father's will, not only to the disgrace of a public arrest but also to the fate of a common delinquent. Hear Him address His enemies. With the majesty, freedom, and sublime composure of One who marks out for Himself the path on which He is to walk in accordance with His Father's counsel, He says to the multitude and especially to their leaders, the chief priests, and the captains of the Jewish temple guard, and the elders, the assessors of the Sanhedrin: “Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take Me? I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took Me not” (Mark 14:48b&49a); “Ye stretched forth no hands against Me” (Luke 22:53b).

Our Lord intends that these words shall serve as a testimony, not merely to those who have heard them, but also to the whole world, that He was led guiltless to the slaughter and that no power on earth would have been able to overcome Him had He not, when His hour had come, voluntarily yielded Himself in free submission to His Father's will. Until He had completed His ministerial office, no enemy dared to touch Him. Nor had they been able to discover anything in Him which might have enabled them to prosecute Him. The invisible barrier is now removed. “This,” continues the Saviour, to the profound confusion of His adversaries, “This is your hour, and the power of darkness.” His meaning is that “by an act of the divine government the chain of Satan had been lengthened, that it may do with Me as it pleases.” What self-possession and divine composure are in these words. With unreserved willingness He yields Himself up to the most disgraceful treatment. His soul continues in a state of equanimity and serenity, just as if they were not jailer's assistants who bound him with cords but followers and friends.

What benefit do we derive from the fact of Christ's giving Himself so completely and devotedly to the Father? The greatest and the most beatifying of which thought is capable—Listen! Jehovah says in His law, “None shall appear before Me empty.” Consider, that if we wish to inherit heaven we cannot do without salvation. We now possess it, and the days of our grief and shame are at an end. We may now appear boldly before the Father, knowing that He loves us and has opened the gates of His palace to us. □

(To be continued)



Church History

The Spread of Christianity (3)

J.N. Mouthaan, Veenendaal, the Netherlands

(Translated from *De Saambinder*)

In the third century, Christianity grew to become a significant factor in the Roman Empire. About the year 250 A.D. there were approximately 1.1 million Christians. By 300 A.D. that number had grown to about 6 million. That growth, however, did not come without strife.

The third century was earmarked by intense persecution. To offer Christians up to Caesar was a favored means to track down adherents. This Caesar cult was not at all intended as a serious religion but had as its purpose to try to preserve and hold fast the unity in the Roman Empire. The third century was also the century which saw the martyrdom of Perpetua (died 203 A.D.), Bishop Ciprianus of Carthage (210-258 A.D.), and many others.

These persecutions and tortures did not, however, diminish the number of adherents but served to increase them. Tertullian (±155-220 A.D.) gives a glowing testimony about that: "Well then, honorable governors, you will be even more favored in the eyes of the people when you, according to their wishes, sacrifice, crucify, torture, judge, and destroy Christians. In your unrighteousness lies the proof of our innocence; that is why God allows it that we suffer these things" (*Apologetics*, chapter 50). In this context he also uses the well-known saying, "As often as you mow down our numbers our total increases; the blood of the Christians is the seed of the Church" (*Apologetics*, chapter 50).

Courage and no fear of death

He who pages through the *Book of the Martyrs* can read about Christian courage, fervency, and a fearless contempt of death. A certain Probus—his name means the virtuous one—answered the following during his interrogation when asked about his name: "My most important and honorable name is Christian, but the name with which I go about the world is Probus" (Martelaars acte van Tarachus, Probus and Andronicus). A certain deacon with the name of Laurentius was burned at the stake in 252 A.D. According to the *Book of the Martyrs* he said after some time with a great amount of freedom, "Turn that portion of my body which has been burned, and let it be consumed." The Chronicler says about this "that through the gracious strengthening by God, the coals were for him as roses, and as a coolant and refreshment in his suffering." After having prayed for the Roman Empire

and for his enemies, he died in the Lord with great steadfastness (*Book of the Martyrs*, pages 37-38).

The fearlessness of death is as a red cord found in many of the testimonies of the martyrs. The secret of this fearlessness of death can be found in the resurrection of the dead. According to Tertullian, a Christian who suffers persecution hopes upon God to receive from Him the true resurrection.

In addition to the testimony of the martyrs, there was also the testimony of the simple Christian lifestyle. In an anonymous letter to a certain Diognetus (2nd century), the following is said about that lifestyle. "They live in their own land, but as strangers; they share in all things as citizens, but they suffer in all things as strangers; every strange land is their fatherland, and yet every country is strange to them; they enter into marriage as all others. They receive children but they do not abandon their posterity; they share their table, but not their bed; they live 'in the flesh,' but not according 'to the flesh.' They live upon the earth, but their home is in heaven; they obey the established laws, but in their own lives they outshine the world in their obeying of them; they love all men, but they are persecuted by all" (*To Diognetus*, chapter 4, paragraphs 5-11).

Stronger growth

About the year 350 A.D. there was a great change in the Roman Empire. Because of the efforts of Constantine the Great, Christianity had become an accepted religion. This led to an even greater growth. It is estimated that of the sixty million citizens of the Roman Empire, approximately thirty-three million were Christians. This new situation, however, also had its dark side. Because of the freedom enjoyed by the Christians, sharp discussions arose among them about the doctrines of the Trinity and the two natures of Christ. The question may also be asked whether the profundity of Christianity has not suffered because of this outward growth. There is, however, no question of the fact that Christianity definitely grew in the fourth century. The church fathers gave testimony in their writings that they truly loved the Christ of the Scriptures. Congregations from whom such preachers emanated and where similar preachers labored must have been workplaces of the Holy Spirit. ▣

(To be continued)

The world's idea of greatness is to rule, but Christian greatness consists in serving.

—J.C. Ryle



Commentary

The Man Born Blind⁽¹⁾

Rev. H. de Leeuw, Franklin Lakes, NJ

“Blind from his birth ... I must work” (John 9).

At times, we all have come across a blind man who has either a service dog or a white cane to help him navigate. The blindness is something that never leaves him. He goes to bed at night and rises in the morning, but blindness is and remains his portion. The Bible speaks of blindness in various places. We read of it for the first time in the Bible where it was used by Satan to deceive Eve by telling her, “Your eyes shall be opened.” In our state of rectitude, Satan said we were blind. We believed the liar from the beginning. We have fallen, and now the consequences of sin are upon us. Then, in the first place, our blindness is spiritual. After our deep fall we became blind for the Light. We fell into our great darkness and must suffer the consequences of our sin. John 9 relays the history of one who suffered literal blindness.

Reader, we are blind, also. What a unique blindness because you are reading these words, but the blindness that we have by nature is the result of sin. Sin has made everything dark. We all know that in darkness if a light goes on, then one sees the light in the darkness. However, if one is truly blind in a dark room and a light turns on, then one still does not see; he remains in darkness. That is the main theme in this chapter. The Light of the world is coming to the foreground in this chapter as to how He describes Himself in the previous chapter. In John 8:12b the Lord Jesus says, “I am the light of the world.” Yet, we need to be able to see Him with spiritual eyes. Our natural eyes will not see light in Him. The Lord Jesus, in chapter 9, displays that very clearly.

In chapter 9 the Lord Jesus must flee from the Jews. They have taken up stones and are ready to kill Him. We feel pity for Him when we read this. We ask a question, “What has He done worthy of stoning?” He has spoken the truth. The truth is sharp; the Light of the world has confronted the Jews with their blindness. Dear reader, do not think that you are better than those Jews. The stones are the outward emblems of their inward unbelief. You and I, by nature, have that same awful sin. I read in John 8:45, “And because I tell you the truth, ye believe Me not.” It is our unbelief—not to believe the truth that is displayed to us in the preaching or reading of God’s Word, the truth that displays who we are. Certainly, we do not literally cast stones, but to keep going in sin is the same as casting stones.

The Lord Jesus had fled from the Jews, and on His way out of the temple He stops by this man born blind. The blindness that this man has is emphasized as being from birth. What does that mean? The disciples were convinced that this man must have done something bad. You can read in the second verse, “Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?” The disciples were Jews and among the Jews there was a common understanding that if a great sin were committed, that would be made manifest in the punishment. They were asking for the cause of this man’s blindness.

The Lord Jesus has instruction for His disciples. The Lord is going to use this man, who is suffering the dreadful effects of our sin, to display the purpose of His coming. In verse 4 we read, “I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.” A divine purpose is revealed. Do you notice where? By the consequences of sin, amid the world that is separated from God by sin, the Lord Jesus stops by the man born

blind and begins to speak of the purpose of His coming.

The purpose is first, “I must work.” Notice Christ is revealing very clearly here that He has come for a purpose. Of the Divine Trinity, He became man. Here He walks by the consequences of sin.

Picture it, my dear reader, a man born blind from birth, and the Lord Jesus stops and begins to speak. Oh, then I receive liberty to say that for all it is still possible because the Lord Jesus, God and man in one Person, stops by one evidently suffering under the consequence of sin. By this broken image bearer He says, “I must work.”

Dear reader, it begins with an act of God. It does not begin with human efforts. We are blind. We see nothing. We see no God; neither do we see our sin, but, oh, that free and sovereign wonder—He sees, and stops. “I must work.” Dear reader, has it become reality already that you are blind? The blind man of John 9 was blind from birth with no reason to hope for healing or improvement. Yet, in this history the Light of the World stops by this hopeless case. “I must work”—then for blind ones a way is declared in the work of Another. He will work the works of Him that sent Him. ▣

(To be continued)



Doctrinal Studies

The Fall (3)

Rev. G. H. Kersten (1882-1948)

(Taken from *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume 1*, Chapter 16, The Fall)

The Fall was in the decree of God (*continued*)

Therefore, God's decree does not remove man's responsibility for his deeds, although because of the decree the Fall must necessarily take place. To understand this, we must distinguish between two kinds of necessity:

- a) an actual necessity,
- b) a necessity of consequence.

The actual necessity concerns the inanimate and irrational Creation. They go the way ordained by God in His counsel without any conscious cooperation from their side. The sun rises and sets, warm air rises, the cattle bring forth their young ones, and the herb grows its seed because God has destined it thus in His counsel. Unconsciously, these creatures follow the predetermined way.

However, rational creatures act consciously, and although they also perform the counsel of the Lord in all their actions, they are responsible for their commissions and omissions to Him who shall one day judge them according to what they have done. With rational creatures there is a necessity of consequence. Three examples may make it clearer that the stipulations of God's decree do not remove man's responsibility for his actions.

Esau was a reprobate. In eternity God had so decreed it in absolute sovereignty. The Lord had spoken about this to Rebecca when the children were not yet born, neither having done good or evil, saying, "The elder shall serve the younger;" and that took place so "that the purpose of God according to election might stand." Not Esau, but Jacob would inherit the right of the firstborn. Still, Esau sold his birthright willingly; he despised God's salvation. Therefore, Paul called him a profane person. It must thus take place according to God's eternal decree, yet Esau did this without being compelled—entirely voluntarily he sold the birthright to his own destruction. God's decree did not remove his responsibility for his actions.

Pharaoh is also an example of this. God had previously said to Moses, "I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go." According to God's eternal decree Pharaoh would refuse to give Israel deliverance. Pharaoh did so, but when he said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go," he freely and voluntarily refused, and he hardened his heart. It had to be so according to God's decree, yet Pharaoh bore the guilt of his voluntary action to his own condemnation.

A third example is Judas, of whom Scripture prophesied that he would betray Christ. It was determined thus in God's decree from eternity (Acts 1:16). That betrayal had to come to pass. Christ, therefore, did not say, "Good it were

if he had never been born," but "good were it for that man if he had never been born" (Mark 14:21). Still, Judas committed this wretched act voluntarily and confessed it in his despair, "I have betrayed the innocent blood." I have done it.

No one on earth takes a step outside of God's counsel, but everyone shall give an account of his actions before the judgment seat of God. Thus, also the Fall had to take place because of God's decree, yet man is responsible for his fall, and because he broke the covenant, he is subject to eternal death. Man, therefore, fell according to God's decree, as also the fall of the angels lay in God's decree. God did not passively await what man would do, and although God hates sin according to all His perfections, He has willed and allowed it in order that He would glorify Himself in righteousness and mercy.

This does not at all make God an author of sin. Both the angels and men are the workers of iniquity. By virtue of God's decree, their fall had to happen, yet they fell willingly, and the full responsibility for their fall is theirs because they had the ability to remain standing. Therefore, Adam subjected himself to the punishment that God righteously brought upon him, that is, the punishment of death.

This punishment was not too severe. It could be none other than death. The injury done to God's Word by making the true God seem to be a liar already deserved that punishment. God is not mocked. Moreover, he who tears himself loose from God must necessarily die.

By one man

If only Eve had eaten, she would have subjected only herself to death. Eve ate for herself alone. In his book on divine distinctions and philosophical rules, Maccovius teaches that the sin of Eve is also imputed to her posterity, even though Romans 5 speaks six times about the one man by whom sin came into the world. Maccovius seeks to explain this by stating that husband and wife are one flesh, but this explanation does not work. God's Word teaches clearly that Eve ate separately, and after that Adam also ate. In this way Maccovius minimizes imputation because of the covenant relationship.

Adam was the head of the Covenant of Works and represented all his posterity. If he had remained standing, all his posterity would have stood in him. In his fall, however, all men fell. Thus, death came into the world, and passed upon all men, not by the disobedience of two, but of one man. Paul teaches emphatically that by one man sin entered into the world (Romans 5:12); that by the offence of one many have died (Romans 5:15); that the judgment was by one that sinned (Romans 5:16); that by one man's

offence death reigned by one (Romans 5:17); and that by one man's disobedience many were made sinners (Romans 5:19). In Adam's disobedience, and in his alone, all his descendants have placed themselves guilty before God.

And in his one sin

No matter how many sins may have cleaved to Adam after the Fall, only the one sin of breaking the covenant is imputed to his posterity, for in this one sin Adam acted as

covenant head. The judgment is by one sin unto condemnation (Romans 5:16). By one offence judgment came upon all men to condemnation (Romans 5:18). Thus, Adam's sin in eating of the forbidden tree was the sin of all men; his fall was the fall of all men, because he was not only the father of them all but also the covenant head of them all. The imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity is thus by virtue of the covenant relationship. ■

(To be continued)



For Young and Old

God, the Dispenser of His Word

(Taken from a 1862 issue of The Gospel Standard)

It was the custom of Mr. Sharp, who was a minister of the gospel in Brighton for many years, to take a tour two or three times a year around the country and dispense the Word where there was no stated ministry. W—m. was one of those places, and there he related the following account of the Lord's dealings with him:

He had been on one of these tours and had met with much of his dear Master's presence in the Word, and he believed the Word had been much blessed not only to his own soul but also to the souls of his hearers. The Lord had brought him home again in peace and safety. That same evening, he was going to preach to his own people in his own little chapel. In meditating on the goodness of the Lord to him in his late journey, and in having brought him back again once more in peace and safety, he felt his heart more than usually drawn out in love towards his blessed Master, and he felt very comfortable both in mind and body. Likewise, he had a text from which to preach in which he could see much light, beauty, and order. As was his custom he went into his little closet a short time previous to commencing to ask the Lord to open his mouth and to make the word a blessing to the hearts and souls of his people, but he did not on this occasion ask the Lord for a text since he thought he had one.

A few minutes before it was time to begin, while he was going up the pulpit stairs, he lost his text. It seemed completely taken away so that he was much perplexed as to what to do, and that which just earlier was light, beauty, and order was now nothing but darkness and confusion. He could not think of a single passage on which to concentrate for a text and felt almost as if he must give it up for that time. The first hymn was given out and sung while he tremblingly engaged in prayer. Prayer being over and still with no text, he was nearly at his wits' end what to do, but while the second hymn was given out and sung,

these words came to him with some light and sweetness, "Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction." He had just time to look in his concordance to see where the words were found (Proverbs 31:8). As he gave them out for his text, he found the Lord present with him. He opened his mouth and was blessedly enabled to speak from them.

When the service was over and the congregation had departed, one man only remained; he was a stranger. He went up to Mr. Sharp and said, "Perhaps, Sir, you will think what I am going to say strange, but it is no less true than strange that the Lord has brought me nearly two hundred miles to hear the discourse you have preached tonight. I have known the Lord, I trust, for years—or rather, have been known of Him—and many have been the times I have enjoyed sweet union and communion with Him. However, in process of time much darkness and distress of soul came on, to such a degree that it brought my soul to the brink of despair and my feeble body to the brink of the grave. Such hold it had upon me that I nearly lost the use of my speech and became, as it were, a dumb man. I had physicians one after another, but they all proved of no value. They did not understand my case, nor could anyone but He who ordered it."

The man continued, "At length my medical adviser said to me with much earnestness, 'You must go to Brighton, and try what Brighton will do for you. You will be a dead man if you stop here.' I took his advice and reached Brighton this afternoon, and as I was roving about to see where I should take up my quarters, I saw a few poor people coming into this place. Thinking perhaps the truth might be preached here, I turned in. The Lord has met with me and restored my soul, and opened my mouth as you can hear. I can now talk, whereas I was nearly dumb when I entered the place. I may now go home again as the reason of my coming is obtained, and I shall, God willing, do so tomorrow." ■



Contemporary Issues

Radicalization in Our Circles

G.R. Van Leeuwen, Opheusden, the Netherlands

(Translated from *De Saambinder*, December 2, 2021)

The corona pandemic is passing through the world for the fourth time (December 2021). Many in our nation are sick. The idea that it is just like a mild case of the flu is not heard so much anymore. The number of seriously ill people has become too great to dismiss it in such a manner, and many know of family members who have died due to the coronavirus (often in combination with underlying illnesses or old age).

The Dutch government has again taken strong measures in dealing with the pandemic. At the same time, it has generated so much opposition among the people that riots have broken out, and the police have responded with gunfire. What is the reason that behavior has come to this point?

Inconsistent and unreliable

The Dutch government has, until recently, been an opponent of every form of coercion in dealing with the virus. Citizens were earnestly admonished about their responsibility as is the proper way. At the present time, however, the Dutch government is firmly following a course of force and is considering express forms of coercion. The required corona admission pass (the QR code¹), when involved in public traffic, plays a large part in the present turmoil. The Dutch minister of health has only one solution—massive vaccination. The present government decision can lead to a split in society, whereby an increasing polarization is promoted in which we already see little cohesion, mutual respect, or understanding. This explains the societal resistance.

Yet, it pleases God to govern us by their hand (Romans 13)

A recent investigation shows that only about 30% of the citizens trust the authorities. Also, among us there are people who speak derisively about those in authority. Rev. G.H. Kersten warns against this very forcefully in his explanation of the Heidelberg Catechism's Lord's Day 39 as he notes, "that it pleases God to govern us by the hand of our rulers. This in turn gives us the firm basis for our submission to the authorities which are placed over us and for our patience with their infirmities. It is impropriety on our part to say, 'How can our government enact such laws?' In our irritation and rebellion we only make matters worse. We must be silent and acknowledge that God demands our submission to those in authority over us because it pleases Him to govern us by their hand."²

¹In the Netherlands this QR code gives people the ability to show they have been tested or vaccinated.

²Rev. G.H. Kersten, Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 39, NRC Book & Publishing, 1992 edition, pages 548&549; 1968 edition, Vol. 2, page 187.

Conspiracy theories

It is worrisome when we must observe that the societal unrest in our nation does not bypass our circles. All types of conspiracy theories make the rounds among us, also. The hallmark of a conspiracy theory is that there is often a kernel of truth found in it; the story has to come from somewhere, but all kinds of other matters are then tacked on to it. When one points to all the "loose ends" which appear to be untrue or that they are based on assumptions, people become angry. We may not question the "facts." To argue about them is useless, and discussions about them are actually not possible. Let us realize that conspiracies have been present throughout the ages. Conspiracy theories always appear when there is a lack of information, and in times of anxiety, mistrust, and uncertainty. In the past this has been an explosive combination. People want to shake their fellow citizens awake. Personal points of view are brought forward as doctrine, almost like a religion.

There are a number of people who are influential opinion carriers—they can be called agents of anxiety—who know how to bind together conspiracies which are unquestionably believed. A discussion about these secret conspiracies is usually superficial, and every nuance is lacking. The reactions on social media are in many instances uninhibited thoughts and feelings in words that are seldom uplifting.

Revelation 13

It is truly concerning that a portion of our denomination goes along with this radicalization, and makes, as it seems, very basic or fundamental statements of fact. Romans 13, where we are called to respect and pray for the authorities, is no longer read; people would rather read Revelation 13. People seem to know exactly what the meaning is of the beast which is described in this chapter. We recall that the token of this beast was also considered as actual when the barcodes were introduced and placed upon products and when debit cards began to be used instead of cash. There were people, also at that time, who did not want to buy any product which had a barcode on it, and they said that in the future they would use only cash for their purchases. Whom do we still hear speaking about this? Let us be careful with all of these definitive comments about the QR code. It is, of course, fine if you do not want to use it. The places where the QR code (or vaccination) is compulsory we do not have to visit. A trip to another country is becoming more and more difficult. What do we do when our work requires a visit to a foreign country?

Rev. W. Teelinck gives us good advice in such situations.

“Let us be careful in being too determined and forceful in our comments. That means being wary of asserting matters in such a way as: that is not right, that is evil, that is certain, it must be that way, and it cannot be any different. It may happen that we make a mistake in a certain matter, and then because of shame we continue to maintain this position, too embarrassed to recall what we have asserted so vigorously. We are then caught up in our own nets, entangled in our own wrong conclusion.”³

Parents and instructors

The danger of the radicalization in our own circles is that we transmit our mistrust of the authorities to our children. That has enormous consequences for the obeying of those in authority. When students delightfully relate to their instructors their parents’ rebellion against authority, this will manifest itself in disobedience in all types of other situations. Let us not forget that Romans 13 is also in force when we have a government which does not take into account God’s commandments. A biblical foundation is to be found in Titus 3, “Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.”

It is especially necessary, in a time of the questioning of authority, to be admonished to obey our government authorities as long as the laws which are promulgated do not directly oppose God’s commandments. That is also true

³W. Teelink, *De politieke Christen (The Political Christian)*.

when the government is not of our choice. Let us not join in with all kinds of activities which attempt to undermine authority. Living in enmity is not appropriate. Think of the words of the Lord Jesus, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44b). Let us stop with the forwarding of nonsensical stories; we could better be busy praying continuously for our governmental leaders.

Book of Revelation

Is not the attention for the Book of Revelation proper? Certainly, for we can read in this book of the Bible what oppressive times will come. Satan goes about as a roaring lion. Because of the prophetic character of the book, we must be hesitant to point out which events are meant and certainly not promote our own ideas by means of this Bible book. The Book of Revelation calls out to us that we must hasten for our lives’ sake. The last book of the Bible calls out to us for reflection and conversion. The corona pandemic does that, also. The judgments have come upon us. What do they say unto us personally? Who sees God’s hand in all of this? Does it lead us to humble ourselves, or does it just lead to discussions?

Oh, that the pandemic would lead us not only personally but also as a nation and people to turn into ourselves. There is every reason not to keep ourselves busy with so-called conspiracies but rather to be concerned with the welfare of our soul. “For the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (James 5:8b). □



Reflections

The Song of a New Heart (2)

Rev. J. den Hoed, Lynden, WA

“Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation”
(Isaiah 12:2&3).

The Song of a New Heart whispered, “Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me,” and then follows a joyful confession. Behold, God is my salvation. Behold, it seems as if that new heart wants to say, “Stop a moment; there is something wonderful I may say: ‘The Lord is my God, the Lord is my Saviour, He is all that my heart longs for.’”

We notice that the confession is not about self. There are many confessions that *are* all about self, but this song is not.

This Song of a New Heart is about the Father in heaven. He is the One who from the stillness of eternity has chosen and loved deeply fallen sinners. When this may become a song in my heart, then my heart wants to give all honor and glory to a Father whom my heart longs to know as a Father in heaven.

This Song of a New Heart is about God the Lord Jesus Christ—the One who came to open a way where there was no way—the One who came to stand in the breach between God and my soul. When the God-given eye of faith may see this, the new heart wants to give all the honor and glory unto Him. Then I long for a place at His feet and anoint Him the King of my heart.

This Song of a New Heart is about God the Holy Ghost.

He is the One who sought me when I never did seek for Him. He is the One who has come to live in my heart, and when I may feel His presence, my heart is humbled and joyful.

Now, in The Song of a New Heart the heart wants to say, I will trust and not be afraid. There is often so much fear in this new heart. These are the times when there is no song; the enemy is there, and he says I have no right to sing to the honor and glory of my God and Saviour. Oh, how he can cause my heart to tremble. There I stand as a poor, trembling sinner, as a little lamb in a dark corner.

Will my heart ever sing again? No, not in self. However, when my God gives that I may cast the anchor of hope, faith, and love far away from self and it may sink in the solid ground of the mediatorial suffering of an only Saviour, and when I may hear in my heart that He is *my* Saviour, then the new heart may sing. I will not fear, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song.

Now, when all honor and glory may be for the only precious Saviour, there may be an answer for all the enemies. Because of Him who freely gave Himself to satisfy holy justice, there is now never a greater wonder than when one of these deeply fallen sinners may say, "He also has become my salvation." Is there ever a sweeter, more precious moment than when one of these struggling, lost sinners may point to above and say, "He has become my salvation" or when they may say, "He sought for me when I never did seek for Him? He owns me, one who is nothing but a clump of sin. He gave His life and His blood for me."

Now with that God-given faith I may look up and know that He has become my salvation also.

Therefore, in that one word, *salvation*, the prophet looks to above. "Yes, God was angry with me, but now in Christ His anger is turned away. Now I may trust and look to Jehovah. He is my strength, He is my song, He is my salvation." Oh, what immeasurable joy may now fill this broken heart.

With God-given joy I may draw water out of the wells of salvation. I know those wells are ever full. Out of them flows the water of eternal life. Here is a promise that God's dear children, with joy in their heart, may draw that life-giving water for their thirsting soul.

Yet, it is the experience of all those dear children of the Lord that, at times, the well seems to be dry. When you ask me why it is that way, then I may tell you that it is because the Lord loves His children. Again and again, He loves to see them lift their empty hands begging for the water of life. When the wells of salvation seem to be dry, then the Lord's children cry with David of old, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God." When those people may draw water out of the wells of salvation, joy comes in their heart, joy that God's anger is still turned away, joy that in and through Jehovah He is my strength and my song, my hope and expectation. One day the well of salvation will flow forever, and from that well I may experience the love of Jehovah eternally. □

(To be continued)



Questions & Answers

Questions from Our Readers

Rev. H. Hofman, Beckwith, Grand Rapids, MI

In Lord's Day 10, Question 27 of the Heidelberg Catechism we read that all things come, not by chance, but by His fatherly hand. Yet in Luke 10:31 we read, "And by chance there came down a certain priest that way." How can that be explained?

The word that is used in Luke 10:31 is only used once in the New Testament and literally means a coincidence. So here is spoken of a *coincidence* of circumstances. My Webster dictionary helped me out somewhat in finding an answer to this very good question. The word *coincide* comes from the Latin: *co* (together) + *incidere* (fall upon). Here it would simply mean: at the same time, it occurred, thus, an occurrence of events happening at the same time. In itself this does not necessarily exclude the hand of God as confessed in the doctrine of the providence of God. Interestingly though, our forefathers probably felt that the

matter raised here might indeed turn into a question, so they answered it as follows in the Marginal Notes: "That is, without forethought, namely, in respect of these men. For otherwise in respect to the providence of God nothing comes to pass by chance." From the side of the priest and the Levite there was no preconceived purpose, thought, or intent when they passed by that certain man who fell victim to robbers. They just happened to pass by there... They did not include nor regard God's providence, so to speak, but from God's side providence *did* include them though they willfully ignored it. This only increased their guilt, and that is the sad part. (I realize this is a parable, so let us not speculate more about what they were thinking or not thinking.) The focal point is that they were without excuse passing by their neighbor on the other side and even looking on him but ignoring his deep need.

Let us learn even from this parable that we ought to pay close attention to God's providential dealings. The Lord often speaks through His providence in daily life. We ought to be ready at all times to help those in need and who are placed upon our way. Are we at all times sufficiently alert to that? This *Good Samaritan* did not think twice about what he had to do. How often do we ignore the Lord's providence or use it wrongfully to justify our lack of action. The priest and the Levite passing by this man ignored their duty which in God's providence fell upon their path. They ignored

their calling. Perhaps they never even gave it a thought. Let us be vigilant in our walk wherever we are and take to heart what J.C. Ryle writes in his exposition of this text: "To be friendly to all men in this way, is to show something of the mind that was in Christ." ■

Please note the new address for Rev. Hofman:

Send your questions to Rev. H. Hofman, 2339 Deer Trail Dr. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505, or hofman@premieronline.net.

Providence

God is accepted as omnipotent, not because He has power whether He acts or not, nor because by some general instinct He maintains the order of creation, but because in controlling heaven and earth by His Providence, He so overrules everything that nothing happens without His approval.

—John Calvin



Current Events

Court Denies City Right to Argue Church's Beliefs

A Supreme Court Justice wrote a dissent in a case revolving around church taxation. He warned against allowing government officials to define religious beliefs. "The First Amendment does not permit bureaucrats or judges to 'subject' religious beliefs 'to verification,'" the justice said. "About this, the Court has spoken plainly and consistently for many years." In this case a church's home city argued that the church misunderstood its own doctrine which said that the youth ministers were not ordained and thus their housing was not tax-exempt. —FoxNews.com

Christian Now President of Egyptian Supreme Court

Egyptian President al-Sisi has appointed a Christian, Judge Eskandar, as President of the country's Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC). The judge, sixty-five, is the first ever Christian to be appointed to the position, and makes him Egypt's highest judge. The appointment of a Christian to such a high position is rare in a Muslim-majority country and shows the courage of the president's support for religious equality and freedom. Christians, who make up 10% of the population of Egypt, say that their situation in the country is now better than it has ever been in living memory. —BarnabasFund.org

Deep Concern for Ukraine

In 1991, Ukraine gained its independence from the Soviet Union; since then it has had freedom of religion, and no religious group has faced persecution. However, since 2014, Russian-backed separatists who are in control of parts of Luhansk and Donetsk in eastern Ukraine have greatly restricted the freedom of Christians who do not belong to the Russian Orthodox Church. During the years of the Soviet Union, Ukraine was subject to strict religious regulation by the Communist

government, Christians faced persecution and many church leaders were imprisoned. The recent invasion of Ukraine by Russia has led to an outpouring of anguish and deep concern for Ukraine and its people.

—ChurchInChains.ie

U.S. Ukrainian Churches Are Praying for Relief

"We reacted, of course, with shock, with devastation in our hearts and souls, for what's happening to our families," said the priest of a Seattle Ukrainian church. Most parishioners still have family in Ukraine. More people are attending church to pray since Russia attacked. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church has raised \$500,000 nationwide. The money is going to medical and humanitarian relief, and it's more than Ukrainians who are donating. "I did not expect that much support from people who are not Ukrainian," said the Holy Trinity Ukrainian Mission Parish treasurer. "It's Americans, Asian Americans. It's everyone. Everyone is supporting us." —FoxNews.com

Atrocity in Kenya for a Young Girl

Life can completely and permanently change in an instant. Young Nancy from Kenya knows this all too well. One evening, she and her family were sitting outside when a neighbor approached and detonated a suicide bomb killing Nancy's parents and himself. The neighbor had turned to radical Islam, and he felt that it was his duty to attack this Christian family. In the aftermath of tragedies like this, we are often left wondering why. God spared Nancy for a reason. The International Christian Concern (ICC) is going to stand beside her in the coming years and provide her with educational support. We pray that she will see that the church never left her side amidst life's darkest moments.

—Persecution.org



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

The Confession of Faith (28) **Article XXVIII: That Every One Is Bound to Join Himself to the True Church** *(continued)*

Rev. A.M. den Boer (1929-2004)

In our previous article we stated that the condition of the church in our days is sad. Many schisms have taken place in the church, and they are still happening at the present.

How necessary it is to urge unity in the church as it is done in this article: “Maintaining the unity of the Church; submitting themselves to the doctrine and discipline thereof; bowing their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ; and as mutual members of the same body, serving to the edification of the brethren, according to the talents God has given them.” The Lord has said, “For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.” The divine service, the practice of true religion, and the discipline of Christ is not a slavish service. The Lord promises, “to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.” If we do the opposite, forsaking the assembling of ourselves together and despising the sacraments, then we cannot and should not expect the favor of the Lord.

This article not only emphasizes the necessity to join the true Church but also to serve to the edification of the brethren according to the talents which the Lord has given. This can only be done with the help of the Lord! Then we will do it with our heart, being moved, concerning our fellow travelers to eternity. We find this of David in 2 Samuel 1:26a, “I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan.” When the need of Zion is bound upon our heart, then we will plead with the Lord, “Do good in Thy good pleasure unto Zion: build Thou the walls of Jerusalem” (Psalm 51:18). We will also edify our brethren with our mouth, assisting by word and deed, praying for each other, speaking good words to the pious. Peter was in prison praying for the Church. A word at the right time can sometimes do much good. We should also serve with our deeds, helping the needy as David did to Mephibosheth. We should not forget hospitality.

In many ways we can serve the brethren with and according to the talents which it has pleased the Lord to give unto us.

The article continues—“And that this may be the more effectually observed, it is the duty of all believers, according to the Word of God, to separate themselves from all those who do not belong to the Church, and to join themselves to this congregation, wheresoever God hath established it.” Here, the Bible speaks of the office of all believers. The apostle has said, “How ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.” Every baptized and confessing member of the church should not only ask the Lord for true conversion but should also use the means which the Lord has given to His Church. According to the demand of the Lord, none may be unconverted; however, only the true believers know this practically, and they have the commission to exercise the office of all believers.

True Christians are partakers of the anointing of Christ. As Christ was anointed unto prophet, priest, and king, so they, too, must serve as office bearers. As prophet they must confess the name of the Lord before friend and enemy, as priest present themselves as a living sacrifice of thankfulness to God, and as king fight with a good and free conscience against sin and Satan. The office of all believers is distinct from the offices in the church—ministers, elders, and deacons. It is an office given to all believers, and the rights and duties of the “office of all believers” rest upon the whole congregation.

In this article we also find a rather difficult part, namely, “to separate themselves from all those who do not belong to the Church.” It does not say that we may separate from the true Church, but must separate from the false church. We first, then, think of the church of Rome. Our fathers left this church because there was so much in it contrary to God’s

Word, such as the mass, the worship of saints and images, the tradition of the church made equal to the Word of God, etc. Such a separation is grounded upon God's Word, "And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" (2 Corinthians 6:15). Our Reformed fathers left the church of Rome because it was a false church although they did not deny that some truth was yet found in it.

How such a division should take place is not described. Should it be as an individual, as a consistory, or by the whole congregation? We must always be careful in labeling a church as a false church and then leaving it. It must be understood that this may only be done on the basis of God's Word, and from it we must have the proof to justify our deed. Evil, sin, and shortcomings in church life do not always give us the right to make a separation. The church of Corinth had many sins—divisions, discords, incest, profanation of the Lord's Supper. The believers were not told to leave the church but to take away the sin out of their midst. This may not be forgotten in our days, for people change so easily according to their own insight and not based upon God's Word.

In 1834 in the Netherlands, a secession took place. King William I took most of the power away from the church; at the same time complete freedom of doctrine was permitted and even unbelievers received offices and were allowed to take part in the sacraments. The confession was put aside and edicts (regulations—reglementen) came in its place. A conflict was bound to develop, for this could not go together with the service of the Lord, and the secession became a fact. The Lord gives permission to separate in such circumstances; we may not remain together at the cost of the truth.

We are to join the congregation "wheresoever God

hath established it." This can be very difficult. It was so in the days of the Reformation, of the Secession, and in the time of Rev. Ledeboer. "Even though the magistrates and edicts of princes be against it." It is true, man is not almighty, but under the permission of the Lord he can have much power. The reality of this we can find in the books of the martyrs.

Many of our contemporaries think differently about this, believing that in days of persecution you should keep yourselves quiet. They have also given biblical examples, such as Obadiah at the court of Ahab, Naaman the Syrian, and Nicodemus. In days of prosperity, it is easy to write otherwise, they say, but to put it into practice is a different thing. Our fathers never condemned those who, out of fear, bowed before the enemy in certain things, but they maintained that it was wrong. Many heroes of faith are mentioned in God's Word and in church history, which is only possible with the Lord's help.

This article concludes with these words, "Therefore all those, who separate themselves from the same, or do not join themselves to it, act contrary to the ordinance of God." How do we join the church? By baptism as infants, we are written in the registers or books of the church, but then we are minor members. By confession we take over the responsibility of our parents. It is not possible to remain a baptized member of the church. At a certain age we should make up our mind, and it should not be influenced by secondary reasons such as we would like to marry or have a child to be baptized.

We may not join the world, for the displeasure of the Lord will come upon us. We must join the true Church, regarding which our following article will speak. Only by regeneration do we become a member of the living Church, and it is my wish that the Lord may give this to all of us.

Born of God

A child of God is made
Not from the parents' blood;
No worth the father has convey'd
To make his infant good.

Nor may the will of man
Convert the sinful heart,
Nor sense, nor mighty reason can
A spark of life impart.

No man has found the skill
To make a child of God;
It soars above the human will,
And out of nature's road.

Without the Spirit's aid,
An earthly worm I am;
Conceiv'd in sin, my soul is dead,
My worship blind and lame.

O Lord, afford relief,
And quickening pow'r convey;
Or sure mine ear remaineth deaf,
And sure my feet will stray.

Create my heart anew,
And breathe the life divine,
And fan it with fresh vigour too,
Or soon it will decline.

—J. Berridge



Bible Stories for Little Ones

God Sends Judges to Help the Children of Israel

(Based on Judges 2&3)

Now we are going to read about a sad time in the history of the children of Israel.

The people of Israel who had seen the wonderful works of God had become older. The people who had promised Joshua to remember the Lord and to serve Him forever had done as they had promised. They remembered Joshua's warning that God would certainly punish them if they turned to idols as well as bless them if they walked in His paths.

Most likely the people of Israel had told their own children the many stories of God's help and warned them to keep away from false gods. However, as these children grew up, they forgot about the God of their fathers. Soon they became friends with the Canaanites who were still in the land. They married some of them and soon began to worship their idols.

We, too, should be very careful in making friends. If our friends do not believe in God or respect Him, they will turn us away from the God of our fathers and lead us into wrong paths. It does not take place all at once but with one step at a time. This is what happened to the children of Israel over and over again. It is a sad story in their history...

- First, they forgot God and were soon serving the heathen idols.
- Next, as a punishment, God sent enemies to attack them and make them slaves.
- This made the Israelites so distressed that they did not know what to do. Then they remembered the God of their fathers and prayed to Him for help.
- The Lord heard His people and sent a judge to deliver them from their enemies.
- Then the children of Israel were again able to live safely.

Did they learn from this? No, the same thing happened again and again. They would forget God and return to serving idols. The enemy would come, and the Israelites would cry to God. A judge would be sent to save them from the enemy, and they would be safe, but soon they would return to serving idols.

Are we not the same way? When we are sick, or have trouble, or do wickedly, we pray to God. He hears and helps us, but we soon forget Him and go our own way. When, again, we run into trouble,

God is so good that He again answers our prayer.

We read in the second chapter of the Book of Judges that "the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim," which means idols. "And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers," says the Bible. "And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel."

We must never forget God's Word tells us that God is angry with the wicked every day. What an awful thing it is to have God angry with us! In Hebrews 10 we read, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." If God is for us, who can be against us? However, if God is against us, there is no one greater than God to save us.

Now God was against Israel, and He sent their enemies to conquer them. These enemies made the Israelites slaves, set their own men up as rulers, and made the Israelites obey terrible laws. The Israelites finally gave up. They did not know what to do. Thus, they did what they should have done sooner; they cried to the Lord God of their fathers, the God who had delivered them from their enemies in Egypt many years ago. God, who is so kind and merciful, heard the prayers and cries of His dear people. He sent a man named Othniel, whom the Bible calls a "judge," to rescue them.

God was with Othniel, and he was able to defeat the enemies and drive them out of Israel. So, the land of Israel had rest, but wait... We read in the Bible that "the land had rest forty years." Only forty years? Then, the Bible tells us that "the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD." After the Lord had helped them, they forgot Him.

This time God sent another enemy, Eglon, king of the country of Moab. He asked his friends, the kings of Ammon and Amalek, to help him, and they all invaded the country of Israel. Eglon made himself their king for eighteen years. Finally, the children of Israel were tired of serving this wicked king, and they cried to God who had helped them in previous years. Why did they not cry to God as soon as they came into trouble? Why did they wait eighteen years? How often do we go to the only One who can help us? First, we try to help ourselves, or we ask others for help, or try some other way.

This time God sent a man named Ehud to save the Israelites, and Ehud helped his people in a different way, for he went to King Eglon with a present from them. A present? How was that going to help? It looked as if they wanted to be friends with the king, but wait to see what happened.

When Ehud came, King Eglon was sitting in his parlor. The Bible tells us that he was a very fat man. After giving him the present, Ehud told King Eglon that he had a secret message. This made King Eglon proud. How special! This man had a special message for him, for him, and him only! He certainly did not want his servants to hear this secret message. He told Ehud to wait a minute with his message, and then he ordered his servants to leave the room.

What did Ehud do? He moved his left hand (because he was left-handed) toward his right hip and quickly pulled out his hidden dagger, which is like a large

knife. Before King Eglon could call back his servants, Ehud had thrust the dagger into the king's belly and killed him. Then Ehud escaped through a back door, locking the doors behind him.

The servants waited for King Eglon to finish his visit with Ehud, but, of course, the door did not open. Minutes went by. Hours went by. They thought their king must be resting, and they decided not to bother him. After a while, when the king still did not come out, they began to get worried. Was something wrong? Finally, they found a key, unlocked the door, and there lay their king dead on the floor.

Soon there was the sound of a trumpet as the Israelites came out to fight their enemies. Since the king of the Moabites was dead, they had no one to tell them what to do, and the Israelites were able to conquer them. God had saved them again.



Bible Quiz

A Sceptre

Dear Boys and Girls,

We all know quite a few stories about King David. We know that he was a shepherd boy, that he killed Goliath, and that he became a king. We know that he refused to hurt Saul who was hunting him, was chased by his son Absalom, and fell into sin when he saw Bathsheba. His best friend was Jonathan. He prepared the materials which his son Solomon would use to build the temple, and he feared and loved the Lord. David ruled as king for forty years, seven years in Hebron and thirty-three years in Jerusalem.

Already in Genesis, we read of King David, when Jacob foresaw that the sceptre would not depart from the tribe of Judah. What does this mean? The sceptre was a rod which a king held in his hand to show his royal authority. It was a symbol of his kingship. When Jacob said, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah," he meant that royal authority would come into the tribe of Judah. This was fulfilled when David, who was of the tribe of Judah, became king. Jacob added, "until Shiloh come." Shiloh was promised all through the Old Testament. He would

come, and He would be from this tribe. He would be a King, the King of kings. Who is this Shiloh? Shiloh is a Hebrew word that means "peaceful one" or "a gift, sent." So, we see in this text a King of peace that was a gift sent down from heaven.

David ruled for forty years, but then he died. He was no longer king. However, this King, the Shiloh, reigns forever and ever. He died, but He arose again, and He rules not just over one nation but over all the world. Shiloh is Jesus Christ, the Saviour, the Son of God. We read of Him again in Numbers 24. There, Balaam foretells this same Sceptre would rule. "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel." The King of kings has all authority in heaven and in earth. He is able to rule and to judge, and He is able also to hold out this sceptre in a gesture of mercy.

When a king held out his golden sceptre towards a person, the person was allowed to draw near. That person had received favor in the king's sight. We read of this in Esther. King Ahasuerus held out the golden sceptre to Queen Esther, and she touched

the top of it and made her request known. From this story we can be encouraged that we, like Esther to the earthly king, may bow our knees and pray to the heavenly King of kings. We may ask Him to have mercy on us although we have no rights in ourselves. It could be that it will please Him to hold out His sceptre of mercy so that we may tell Him our requests. "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever" (Exodus 15:18). "The LORD shall reign for ever" (Psalm 146:10a). "And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:33).

* * * * *

1. Read Esther 4 and 5. Then fill in the blanks of this story.

It was dangerous for anyone to come to the king into the inner court if he had not been _____. The only way that person would not die was if the king held out his golden _____. For Esther it was dangerous to go to the king for help because she had not been called for _____ days. However, Mordecai reminded her that perhaps this was a reason she was placed in the kingdom, in order to help her _____. After much prayer and fasting, Esther went. When the king saw her standing in the _____, he held out his sceptre, and she touched the _____ of it. Then he asked her what her request was. In this way, the Lord would overthrow the wicked plans of Haman.

For the Older Children

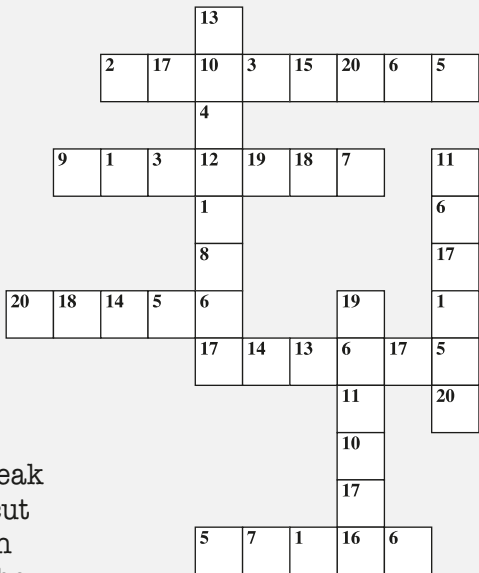
Fill in the blanks. Use the answers to complete the code puzzle at right.

5. "The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the _____," (Isaiah 14)

6. "And fire is gone out of a rod of her _____, which hath devoured her fruit, so that she hath no strong rod to be a sceptre to rule. This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation." (Ezekiel 19)

7. In Amos we read, "I will break also the bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitant from the plain of Aven, and him that holdeth the sceptre from the _____ of Eden: and the people of Syria shall go into captivity unto Kir, saith the LORD."

The letters have been changed to numbers. Please change the numbers back to letters.



I	B
N	W
S	E
M	V
K	A
X	G
X	U
C	T
X	O
D	H

Write the Letter:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
P		L				R			

2. Place the pieces in order to form a verse found in Esther.

o Es	den scept	ing he	stood be
e gol	fore th	se, and	e king.
re toward Esther. S	ther aro		
Then the k	ld out th		

3. Unscramble the letters to complete the Psalter verse.

Thy _____ (yloar) throne, O God,
For evermore shall _____ (sdatn);
Eternal truth and _____ (ectisju) wield
The sceptre in Thy _____ (dnah).

For the Younger Children

4. Take the letters from the sceptre shown at right to complete the verse.

"Thy th__one, O God, is for e__er
and ever: the sceptre of Thy
__ingd__m is a righ__ sceptre."



8. Amos further records God's words, "And I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, and him that holdeth the sceptre from Ashkelon, and I will turn Mine hand against Ekron: and the remnant of the Philistines shall _____, saith the Lord GOD."

9. "And he shall pass through the sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up: and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall _____ away." (Zechariah 10)

10. "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy _____." (Hebrews 1)

11. When Jacob blessed his sons, he spoke of Judah, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a _____ from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." (Genesis 49)

12. "I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall _____ the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." (Numbers 24)

* * * * *

Answers to March's "Nets" quiz:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Toward | Psalm 25:15 |
| 2. Soul | Psalm 35:7 |
| 3a. Followed | Matthew 4:20 |
| 3d. Fishermen | Luke 5:2 |
| 4. Strength | Psalm 31:4 |
| 5. James | Mark 1:19 |
| 6. Mending | Matthew 4:21 |
| 7. Multitude | John 21:6 |
| 8. Land | John 21:8 |
| 9. Foot | Psalm 9:15 |
| 10. Lion | Psalm 10:9 |
| 11. Right | John 21:6 |
| 12. Launch | Luke 5:4 |
| 13. Cast | Matthew 13:47 |
| 14. Fishers | Matthew 4:18 |
| 15. Fall | Psalm 35:8 |
| 16. Bowed | Psalm 57:6 |
| 17. Affliction | Psalm 66:11 |
| 18. Snare | Psalm 140:5 |
| 19. Escape | Psalm 141:10 |
| 20. Spread | Proverbs 1:17 |
| 21. Men | Proverbs 12:12 |
| 22. Feet | Proverbs 29:5 |
| 23. Faleth | Ecclesiastes 9:12 |
| 24. Great multitude | Luke 5:6 |
| 25. Yes | Luke 5:6 |
| 26. Ships | Luke 5:7 |
| 27. 153 | John 21:11 |
| 28. No | John 21:11 |
| 29. Dragging | John 21:8 |

Please send your answers to the address shown below:

Aunt LenaBeth

180 Jacobs Road, Newfoundland, NJ 07435

E-mail: auntlenabeth@gmail.com

Answers to previous quizzes were received in January from:

Clay Bakker 11
Martena Blom (5) 35
Jaxon DeKorne 3
Juliette DeKorne 4
Sarina Den Bok (2) 21
Cody Driesen 28
Toby Driesen 28
Weston Ekema 20
Kari Groen 21
Kurtis Groen 22
Jack Kamp 4
Cody Maassen 9
Lydia Mol 24
Teddy Mol 24
John Murphy 23
Andrew Murphy 2
Blake Pannekoek 12
Lauren Pannekoek 23
Collin Rozeboom 13
Nevaeh Rozeboom (2) 4
Amara Stam 2
Hunter Timmer 22
Kadin Timmer 22
Laurencia Timmer 15
Sierra Timmer 20
Wyatt Timmer 21
Lydia Van Manen 31

Rosalee Van Manen 28
Alivia Vande Hoef 31
Micah Vande Hoef 26
Wyatt Vande Waerdt 16
Aubrey Vanden Berg 10
Heidi Vandenberg 25
Kristen Vandenberg 12
Helen Verhoef 14
Shara Verhoef 15
Caleb Vogelaar 12
Matthew Vogelaar 13
Jonathan Wesdyk 25
Nathan Wesdyk (3) 23
Rebekah Wesdyk (5) 26
Allysa Ymker 3
Allyson Ymker 18
Cameron Ymker (3) 24
Julia Ymker (2) 10
Lane Ymker (2) 6
Lauren Ymker (2) 10

8 Bibles were sent to Bolivia this month. The total is now 515—thank you, boys and girls!

Key to numbers following names:

- Numbers in parentheses represent how many quizzes person answered in the month being reported.
- Numbers without parentheses indicate how many quizzes person has completed toward earning Bibles for Bolivia.
- Solid box indicates person has earned a Bible in the month being reported. Each time six quizzes are completed, another Bible is sent to Bolivia.

Memories of Mother

"When I was a little child," said a good man, "my mother used to bid me kneel beside her, and to place her hand upon my head while she prayed. Before I was old enough to know her worth, she died, and I was left much to my own guidance. Like others, I was inclined to evil passions but often felt myself checked, and as it were drawn back by the soft hand on my head. When I was a young man, I travelled in foreign lands and was exposed to many temptations, but when I would have yielded, the same hand seemed to be on my head, and I was delivered. I appeared to feel its pressure as in the days of my happy infancy, and sometimes there came with it a voice in my heart—a voice that must be obeyed—'Oh, do not this wickedness, my son, nor sin against God.'"

—The Banner of Truth, May 1979

News & Announcements

■ Obituaries

VAN WAARDHUIZEN, Jannie (nee Groenendyk) – Age 52, February 5, 2022, Fort Macleod, Alberta; Husband – Pete; Children – Corina, Peter & Zoey, Helen, Joni, Daniel, Janette, Leah; Parents – John & Corrie Groenendyk; Siblings – Wim Slingerland, Wim & Brenda Groenendyk, Jos & Judy Groenendyk, Corine & Tim Hunt, Gerard & Henrieke Groenendyk; In-laws – Daniel & Helen; Rita & Perry Stadnick, Nellie & Wes Webster, Irene & James Feyter; predeceased by sisters Theodora Groenendyk and Ellie Slingerland. (Mr. J. Groenendyk, Ecclesiastes 3:2.)

■ Farewell of Rev. H. Hofman from Kalamazoo NRC

The farewell sermon of Rev. H. Hofman was held at 6:00 P.M. on February 27 in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Rev. Hofman spoke from Lord's Day 20 of the person, gift, and comfort of the Holy Spirit. He included a personal application to the Kalamazoo congregation wishing that the person of the Holy Spirit would be with them even though he as their undershepherd was leaving for another congregation. Afterwards, Rev. Hofman gave a personal address to the consistory with the words of John 13:34 to "love one another." He personally thanked the congregation for their farewell open house and for their support during the past five-and-a-half-years. Elder Robert DeVries addressed Rev. Hofman on behalf of the Kalamazoo church, thanking both him and Mrs. Hofman for their labors in Kalamazoo and wishing them the Lord's blessing in the Grand Rapids-Beckwith congregation.

Copy Length of Announcements

Dear Reader,

The News & Announcement section of *The Banner of Truth* frequently overflows its customary two pages. Consequently, a good deal of effort is spent attempting to fit the contents. We kindly request that announcements, especially education ads, be restricted to one hundred words (approximately sixteen lines in print). If an announcement is too lengthy, we will reply with a request that it be shortened. You are at liberty to include a link to a webpage where more details can be found. Thank you for your consideration.

—The Editors

■ New from Bible Truth Books

Five Loaves and Two Fishes, Volume 2 by Rev. A.H. Verhoef—This new set of ten sermons by Rev. Verhoef contains several seasonal sermons as well as three sermons about the Conversion of Ephraim (Jeremiah 31:18-21). Hardcover, 193 pages, \$18.75 (#32721).

The Day God Made—A collection of short stories, each regarding the keeping of the Sabbath Day. In every age of history, in every corner of the world, wherever the Lord is pleased to work, He also instills a love for the Sabbath and the Lord of the Sabbath. At a time when Sabbath-keeping is largely forgotten (and even despised), it is hoped that this book will kindle a love for the Sabbath Day. Hardcover, non-fiction, 63 pages, \$14.75 (#24450).

The School of the Word by Rev. E. Venema—A book of daily meditations, compiled from meditations and sermons by Rev. Venema. The daily readings generally follow the ecclesiastical calendar but also pause beside portions from Scripture for several days. In the beginning of the year, we consider the Exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt. The readings for the month of June are taken from Psalm 42, while the month of August contains selections from the Song of Solomon. In October, we meet the ten lepers and Zacchaeus, while November considers the man born blind. Hardcover with sewn-in bookmark, \$27.00 (#63666).

The Fish Merchant by K. Fris—Some years ago, a book was published entitled *Despised and Base*, a biography of Willem Aaftink of Rijssen. The story of Willem Aaftink is now available for children. It is the story of a man who lived as a merchant and an open mocker of the Lord. Later, the Lord stopped him and used him as an elder in village of Rijssen. Hardcover, for ages ten and older, \$18.50 (#32650).

The Minister from the Slums by T. Zegers—As a child, Rev. Venema (1922-2003) grew up in a very poor neighborhood. The Lord stopped him, however, and called him to be one of His servants. He served several congregations, often with much fruit upon his labor. This title is a well-written 58-chapter book penned by his daughter. Hardcover, 187 pages, for ages ten and older, \$18.50 (#52580).

A Hunted Servant of God by Rev. J. deKok—A biography of the life of Peter Datheen (1551-1588). Peter became a monk at a very young age at a monastery in northern France. Before he reached the age of twenty, however, something took place in Peter's life. He removed

the monk's frock to preach the truths of the Reformation instead. He is also well-known for the psalms/psalters that he wrote, which are still used in some of the Dutch congregations today. Hardcover, for ages ten and older, \$18.50 (#42150).

The prices above do not include postage.

Bible Truth Books
P.O. Box 1290
Grand Rapids, MI 49501-1290
Phone / Fax: 616-776-2593
BibleTruthBooks@igatweb.com

■ Young Adult/Post High School Youth Camp, Northern Michigan August 18-20, 2022

A three-day/two-night trip to northern Michigan is being planned, the Lord willing, by a Grand Rapids committee under the oversight of the Beckwith consistory. We are planning to stay in a beautiful lodge located in Boyne Falls, Michigan. On Friday we plan to drive to Mackinaw City and take the ferry across to scenic Mackinac Island. A minister and elder hope to provide meaningful topics and discussions. For further information please call or text 616-329-0705 or email NRCMackinawTrip@gmail.com.

■ Employment Opportunities at Sunset Manor Care Home, Chilliwack, BC

We are seeking applications for keen, warm-hearted individuals to join our excellent team for the following positions:

Nursing: RN's and LPN's who hold a valid license are encouraged to apply. Your professional expertise, knowledge and insight will be most welcomed.

Care Aide: We welcome your application. Training and education can be provided.

For more information and to submit an application, please contact Jake Klaassen at jklaassen@jakesconstruction.ca or Neil Stam at castam71@outlook.com.

Anniversary and other announcements will be placed upon request. A donation for their placement would be appreciated. For consistency, size is limited. Please send your request to the managing editor, James Okken, whose address is shown inside the front cover. Requests for placement should be made **by the first of the month prior to the month of publication.**

Dear reader, the need is great. If you have an education background, please take a moment to consider the many positions available across our congregations.

■ Administrators Needed

Ebenezer Christian School, Sheboygan, Wisconsin, is in urgent need of an administrator/teacher for the 2022-23 school year. We have a very small, multigrade classroom school. Certification is not required for this position although it would be helpful. Currently, the school board acts as principal with further oversight by the consistory. May this position and our need be bound upon someone's heart to come over and help us. Any questions regarding this position and all interested applicants, please contact Randal Teunissen at 920-828-0225 or e-mail, rdteunissen@yahoo.com.

Lynden NRC, Washington—The Lynden congregation is seeking an administrator/teacher to come and help us with our small, multi-grade school. Applicants must be a member of the NRC. The ability to become a Washington State certified elementary teacher is preferred. For more information on this position as well as our newly formed school, please contact the committee president, Jeremy Neels, at 360-988-1884 / jeremyneels@gmail.com or the clerk, Jerry DeBruin, at 360-224-0901.

Netherlands Reformed Christian School, Pompton Plains, New Jersey. The school administrator will strive to direct the school according to the Word of God, the Three Forms of Unity, the Constitution of the Netherlands Reformed Christian School, the policies of the NRC School Board, and the regulations of the New Jersey Department of Education. The primary duty of the administrator is to maintain productive relations with the school board, students, faculty and staff, parents and community.

Relocation expenses and financial incentives will be discussed upon inquiry. For more information or to apply, please contact Tim Mol (education chairman) at 973-204-5677 or email timjmol@yahoo.com, or John Van Der Brink (administrator) at 973-628-7400 email nrcs_office@nrcsnj.org.

Trinity Reformed Christian School, Sunnyside, Washington, welcomes applications for an administrator/teacher for our small school. We are an approved school for grades K-8 but currently have students in the lower grades. We have a four-day school week to allow for adequate preparation and administrative time for our multi-grade classroom.

To apply or request more information, please contact the school board president, Mr. Arthur den Hoed, at 509-786-2354 or email artdenhoed@gmail.com, or Maaiké Van Wingerden at 509-840-0437 or email trinityrcs@embarqmail.com.

■ Teachers Needed

Calvin Christian School, Coalhurst, Alberta, invites applications from teachers of any grade or subject specialty to fill anticipated vacancies beginning September 2022, D.V. We would be thankful to hear from versatile and dedicated applicants to enable continued provision of Christian education to our youth. All applicants must be members of the NRC or a closely-related denomination, and eligible for Alberta certification. For information about positions available, please contact the principal, Mr. Marc Slingerland, at 403-381-3030 or marc.slingerland@ccschool.ca. Should the Lord incline your heart to apply, please submit a cover letter, resumé or C.V., and references to office@ccschool.ca.

Mount Cheam Christian School, Chilliwack, British Columbia, anticipates an URGENT NEED for the next school year with multiple openings for teachers in elementary and secondary. Applicants must hold or be eligible for BC certification, and subscribe to the faith identity of the MCCS Society and the Reformed Congregations in North America. Inquiries should be addressed to the principal, Mr. Jan Neels, at jneels@mccs.ca. Please send your application, along with supporting documentation, to Mr. Jan Neels and to the board secretary, Mr. Toby de Rover, at tobyderover@gmail.com.

Providence Christian School, Kalamazoo, Michigan, is inviting inquiries from qualified teachers interested in teaching in our small Christian school. We presently have openings at the elementary level. For more information, please contact our principal, Tom Kwekel, at tkwekel@pskzoo.com or 616-644-2661.

Plymouth Christian School, Grand Rapids, Michigan, a K-12 NRC school, is accepting applications for a secondary language arts teaching position for the 2022-2023 school year. Interested applicants should contact the principal, Mr. Nathan Bleeker,

at nbleeker@plymouthchristian.us or 616-454-9481 to request an application or to ask questions about the potential position.

Netherlands Reformed Christian School, Pompton Plains, New Jersey. We have openings in both elementary and junior high grades for the 2022-23 school year. Qualified applicants require a teaching degree and an earnest interest in teaching in a Christian school and must be a member in good standing of one of Netherlands Reformed congregations or a denomination with similar teachings. To apply, please see our school's contact information in the Administrators section.

Rehoboth Christian School, Norwich, Ontario, is welcoming applications for both elementary and secondary teaching positions for the 2022-23 school year. One particular area of need is a French teacher at the elementary and, potentially, high school, grade levels. We continue to invite inquiries about our locally developed teaching training program for those who hold a bachelor's degree. Please visit our website at www.rcsnorwich.com for more detailed information about available positions, or contact the interim director, Mr. Andy Stubbe, at director@rcsnorwich.com or 519-863-2403, ext. 223. Submit cover letters and resumes to hr@rcsnorwich.com.

Timothy Christian School, Chilliwack, British Columbia, is looking for teachers who are excited about teaching and have a particular love for the hearts of young people. We have an urgent need for primary teachers but would also consider/encourage secondary and intermediate grade-level applicants. If you are such a teacher, please apply to join our team. Applicants need to be certifiable to teach in British Columbia. For information and/or an application form, please contact either the principal, Mr. Doug Stam, at 604-794-7114 or dstam@timothychristian.ca, or the school board president, Mr. Wim Neels, at 604-858-8834 or wimneels@timothychristian.ca.

To All Candidates for Education Positions

Please visit advertising.nrcea.education for an up-to-date listing of job openings in NRCEA schools as well as links to the school websites for more information about the positions and the schools. When accessing the job bank on the NRCEA SharePoint, please use the following:

User Name:
advertising@nrcea.education
Password: **Schooljobs!**

■ The Banner of Truth in Audio Format

Monthly copies of the articles appearing in *The Banner of Truth* are available on MP3s and CDs for those who have reading difficulties such as poor vision. These MP3s are produced by a committee in Norwich, with the support of the Norwich consistory, who makes the MP3s available to your consistory. Consistories distribute the MP3s and CDs which are provided at no cost. You may contact Mrs. Tillie Lamain at 616-242-0291 or blamain@netscape.net to arrange for a free subscription or to discontinue receiving *The Banner of Truth* on CD.

Meek Redeemer, Now Impart

Lord, I feel a carnal mind
That hangs about me still,
Vainly though I strive to bind
My own rebellious will;
Is not haughtiness of heart
The gulf between my God and me?
Meek Redeemer, now impart
Thine own humility.

Fain would I my Lord pursue,
Be all my Saviour taught,
Do as Jesus bid me do,
And think as Jesus thought;
But 'tis Thou must change my heart,
The perfect gift must come from Thee;
Meek Redeemer, now impart
Thine own humility.

Lord, I cannot, must not, rest,
'Till I Thy mind obtain,
Chase presumption from my breast,
And all Thy mildness gain;
Give me, Lord, Thy gentle heart,
Thy lowly mind my portion be;
Meek Redeemer, now impart
Thine own humility.

Let Thy cross my will control;
Conform me to my Guide.
In Thine image mold my soul,
And crucify my pride;
Give me, Lord, a contrite heart,
A heart that always looks to Thee;
Meek Redeemer, now impart
Thine own humility.

Tear away my every boast,
My stubborn mind abase;
Saviour, fix my only trust
In Thy redeeming grace.
Give me a submissive heart,
From pride and self-dependence free;
Meek Redeemer, now impart
Thy own humility.

—Augustus Toplady